

ATKINSON BUILDING DOMINATES THE SKYLINE

Taranaki can look at the Atkinson Building with pride. It is one of the largest and most impressive office buildings in any provincial city in New Zealand.

When the Deputy Prime Minister, Mr Marshall, officially opens the 50,000 sq ft six-storey departmental building at 11:30 tomorrow morning, the final phase in the initial development of a Government Centre in New Plymouth will have been completed.

The nearby Police Station and the Courthouse were finished in 1962 and 1967 respectively. As time passes, more Government buildings may be erected in this area, though none are being planned yet.

The Government centre has rejuvenated this hilltop area of the city. The three modern buildings provide an air of solidity and permanence.

The demolition of the old Post Office building and the widening of Robe St to provide a park-like setting (with or without the clock tower) will make this a very attractive area.

The completion of the Atkinson Building marks the end of a saga which was a

tantalsing promise to several generations of poorly housed Government employees in New Plymouth.

The Government Centre was in the planning stages more than 30 years ago. At this time, the Courthouse have over years of frustrating delays of World War II and political policy changes, the centre has materialised.

For many of the almost 200 Government employees in the building their new surroundings are palatial in comparison with the surroundings they recently vacated.

But spending on the new building could not be described as extravagant. The design has provided a structure of modern appearance incorporating low-maintenance materials with facilities

Features of new building

The contract for the erection of the Atkinson Building was let to the Roebuck Construction Co Ltd of New Plymouth 25 months ago. Roebuck's price was \$423,445-15-1.

The six-storey building surrounds a central core measuring approximately 122ft by 60ft. The height to the top of the machinery room roof is 87ft above Devere St. Each floor of office space gives access for window

Pioneer and Premier

Sir Harry Atkinson, after whom the new Government office block was named, was an early Taranaki settler who became Prime Minister of New Zealand.

Sir Harry, who served with distinction in the Maori Wars, was elected to the Taranaki Provincial Council in 1857 and to the General Assembly in 1861.

He was Premier in 1876-77, 1883-84 and 1887-81 and was Speaker in the Legislative Council.

Government architect, Mr J. R. Blake-Kelly and the district architect, Wanganui Mr N. N. Carnell.

cleaning and maintenance and an aerial track runs under each projecting slab to carry safety harnesses for such workmen.

The net area of the 49,530 sq ft building available for office subdivision was 22,980 sq ft. Many of the partitions, though appearing permanent are movable, to give flexibility if accommodation needs change.

As the site is a filled gully, the foundations for this building and the courthouses are piled heavily reinforced concrete shear walls to resist earthquakes, surround the centre panels. The exterior is finished



with terrazzo tiles on the ground floor columns and the finish to the fairfaced beams based on enameled concrete.

Main office windows are metal sheathing has been used elsewhere, except for aluminum alloy framed toughened coloured offices and public areas are with glass spandrel panels. Horizontal extruded aluminum have been sprayed with a vinyl substance. The east and north sides will shield suspended ceiling tiles are acoustic plaster.

Inside the wide entrance foyer is finished in timber panelling and there are diffused lights in the ceiling.

Floors are vinyl tiles, some executive veneer. Pressed fluorescent lighting has been used throughout. Strip-type blinds are provided on the east and north sides to control glare.

FIFTY THOUSAND sq ft of building pushing skywards makes the Atkinson Building a focal point in New Plymouth. It dwarfs the adjoining old Post Office building. This view is from the Devonport Flats in St Aubyn St.



GREAT NAMES are worth remembering

Now we have another magnificent building commemorating a famous Taranaki political figure of the years gone by. What of the future?

Well, we have a magnificent building that will, for countless years, stand as a testimonial to its builders - Roebucks.

Historians ascribe to the great Sir Harry ability - shown by Roebucks too in the Atkinson building as in many other fine additions to New Plymouth in recent years. They credit him with tenacity of purpose, a tradition which Roebucks maintain with their application of improved techniques, their attention to detail and encouragement of co-operation among their own team and associated sub-contractors.

Sir Harry was renowned too for an untiring energy - like Roebucks who combine construction skill with speedy accomplishment of the contracts they undertake. Timely completion is as much part of their service as designing and planning too if you would like them to do it for your new commercial building.



ROEBUCK CONSTRUCTION LIMITED

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